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Green Building and Our Nation's Great Work

Remarks by Governor Martin O'Malley to the United States Green Building Council

May 11, 2011

As Delivered

Rick, thanks so very, very much for everything that you do and to everybody with the Green Building Council. It's a great honor to be with all of you, it really and truly is.

I also want to thank Chris Pike for the tremendous work that he does, as well.

My friend, Paul Hawken, who is not prone to hyperbole, has said that the USGBC might be one of the most relevant and fastest growing NGOs of all time, so I applaud all of you for taking part in -- (applause).

And I also want to thank the members of the military who are with us.

How many of you are from Maryland? (Applause).

All right, that's good. My people, my people. *(Laughter).*

Introduction

Our country is in a fight, and it is a fight for our children's future. The key to that fight, and in a larger and broader sense, what I

think what brings you here, is that you understand that this battle – this stiff competition, this collision between the forces around us and the forces of humanity – is not just national in nature, nor is it economic in nature, it's also very much environmental and planetary,… global in its nature.

Innovation is at the center of all of this. And nowhere is that more important than in this battle to create a more sustainable future for our planet and the humanity that depends upon it.

There is a wonderful Native American proverb that says how we treat one another is reflected in how we treat the earth. How we treat one another is reflected in how we treat the earth.

There was a great American named Thomas Berry. I'm sure many of you have read his stuff. He wrote a beautiful book, clear and American, called The Great Work. And he talked about the fact that this planet, this environment of ours, which has seen its population double in our own lifetimes for the first time ever in the history of the species,… this planet, which has been viewed by us from outer space for the first time ever,… this planet is moving from the Cenozoic Era of abundant and diverse life, biodiversity, into the Ecozoic Era. It has been pushed to the Ecozoic Era by our human activity, by the traditional choices we've made in terms of energy use and the traditional choices of design. And whether that Ecozoic Era is sustainable or not for future generations depends on our ability to make the right choices at the right time.

To govern is to choose, that's something John Kennedy said, and I think that's something that most Americans would agree with: to govern is to choose. And in Maryland, we have taken the choices that we make, where green buildings are concerned, very seriously. I'm glad to report to you that yesterday I signed legislation, passed with your help. And I want to thank Stuart Kaplow and all of those with the Maryland Green Building Council.

Yesterday we became the first state in America to adopt the International Green Construction Code. This session, with your help, we also created new incentives for constructing green,

high-performance homes. This builds on progress that we made earlier with your 486-member organizations in Maryland. Together in 2008, we passed reforms that required new public buildings – including the record number of new schools that we've been able to renovate or build over these last four challenging years – to earn LEED Silver Certification. (Applause).

And recently we changed what had been our historic tax credit legislation, which has now been revamped and reworked and renamed the Sustainable Communities Tax Credit, in order to expand the nature of that tax credit and offer some additional public supports for revitalizing our downtowns with not only smart growth but to revise them in clean, green, sustainable ways.

We've also been weatherizing more of our homes with Federal Recovery & Reinvestment resources, which were courageously secured by President Obama and people who supported his decisions in Congress.

We choose to advance green building because we believe in the mission of this organization.

Maryland has more LEED projects per capita, I believe, than any other state in the union. We are in the top 10 nationally for total LEED-certified state government buildings and for LEED-certified commercial buildings. Fourteen of our local governments have adopted LEED-based green building practices, including the greatest city in America, the City of Baltimore, the land of the free and home of the brave. (Applause).

And none of those things happened by chance. They were all the product of choices that we made, choices that we made to innovate and to bring innovation to the fore in this great work before us.

I've had the honor to serve in an elected executive capacity now for about, oh, 12 years. I believe the real challenges we face are not primarily financial nor are they technological. I believe that they are political. In other words, do we still have the ability as a nation to govern ourselves well, to choose well, to make the tough but right decisions and investments that expand opportunity and improve our children's lives and maybe accomplish even more than that?

As an organization, the Green Building Council has embraced what I consider to be a very, very powerful tool for improving the quality of the decisions, the likelihood that we will make the right decisions as a people. Our hope is that we can encourage more of our fellow citizens to embrace these tools as well. And what am I talking about? I'm talking about GIS. I'm talking about using the power of technology, making it available through the internet, to better coordinate and to better track whether we're doing better this week than we were last week, whether we're moving the graphs in the right direction or whether we're not.

I woke up to The Baltimore Sun today, and there was a great article in it. There was also a cruddy article, but I'm not going to tell you about that one. *(Laughter).* But there was a great article in it about -- the headline was "Study: Maryland Among the Best in Results of Transportation Spending." And the conclusion by Mike Dresser was that this report by I think Pew Foundation and others, said that Maryland stands out for the way it uses data on such matters as greenhouse gas emissions and wetlands preservation to measure the impact of transportation decisions on the environment.

StateStat and Smart Maps

We have been using GIS, which I first became kind of hip to in watching what was going on in New York with CompStat and a city that many thought they would never be able to get a handle on violent crime. I saw the power of GIS for not only measuring performance but for using the map to coordinate human activity, to run plays, to identify where the crime was happening, to deploy the police officers effectively to relentlessly follow up and to improve the quality of living in that great city.

Applying GIS to the timeless principles of human endeavor, like setting goals and measuring performance, broadly sharing information rather than hoarding it, forging the willingness to change course when necessary.

We call our collection of all of these strategies in Maryland StateStat, because we're doing it on an enterprise-wide level across our entire -- every aspect of that complex corporation, publicly held, known as the State Government of Maryland. It's exactly what we did in the City of Baltimore when we took CompStat principles and applied them to all of the efforts of city government, not just police, but potholes, trash, schools, all of the things that define whether or not one's quality of life is improving or declining.

It's been my experience that government does a very good job of measuring inputs, but for some reason we've been given a pass and we've not in the past done a very good job of measuring outputs. My friend, the former mayor of New Orleans, Marc Morial once gave me some advice as a young incoming mayor, he said, "kid, if you ever want to hide something, make sure you put it in the city charter or the city budget because nobody ever reads either one." *(Laughter).*

And yet when you think about our government, most of the conversation is about the inputs, right? The budget,... what is it going to cost this year rather than what did we accomplish this week? Did we accomplish more this week than we accomplished in the same week last month.

Ladies and gentlemen, when I took over that organization known as the City Government of Baltimore, Baltimore had become the most violent, the most addicted, and the most abandoned city in America over 30 years.

These were some of the old tenets of city government, and see if they're familiar to any of you that work in the public sector or in human organizations.

Number one, if the governor -- fill in the blank, mayor, county executive -- really wants to know, we can find out but we'll have to pull all our people off of their other jobs and it will take weeks.

Tenet number two: we'll get to that as soon as we can, but it will take a few months because our budget was cut last year, implicitly by you, you jerk. *(Laughter).*

Tenet number three: that's the way we've always done it, or we're already doing that, or, my favorite, we tried that and it didn't work. And akin to we tried that and it didn't work well, that wouldn't work here.

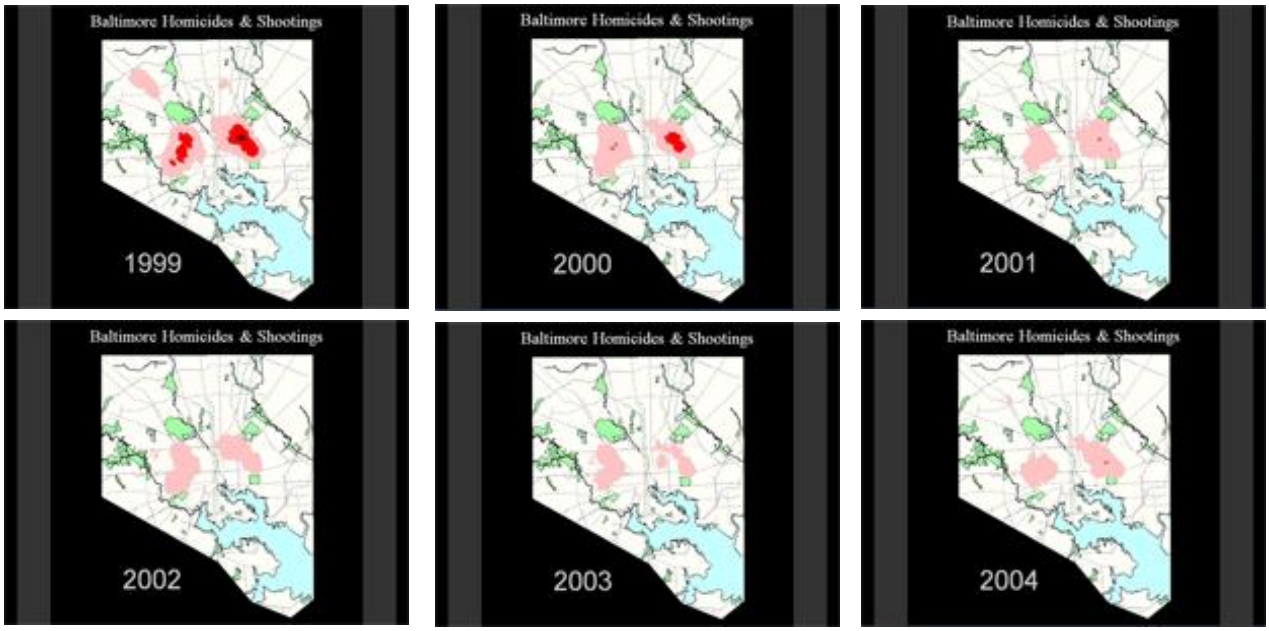
Number four, I hope the legislature forgets

about this before next year's budget.

We replaced all of those with the CompStat tenets, which became the CitiStat tenets, which are the StateStat tenets: Timely, accurate information shared by all, rapid deployment of resources, effective tactics and strategies, relentless follow-up, and assessment.

We would meet every two weeks, all of the departments on a rotating cycle. We'd gather around the map for not only some critical reflection, but also for critical questions, for critical collaboration, for critical conversations, and, most importantly, the critical actions that drive the graph in the right direction against the map and improve performance for all that we serve.

I wanted to go through some maps which we have come to call the kidneys of death maps.



Many of you are familiar with Baltimore's past. What you might not know is that over the last 10 years Baltimore has achieved the third biggest reduction in violent crime of any of the major cities in America. Number one was LA; number two was New York. But number three was Baltimore.

We had crime concentrated in two primary areas and also in northwest Baltimore. And that had been the pattern for 20 years. So, when President Clinton helped us with 200 additional police officers, we didn't divide them by the six "councilmanic" districts and send equal numbers to each district. We deployed to where the homicides were happening, where the shootings were happening, and

where people were being robbed. That's where we put the 200 police officers,... Revolutionary. *(Laughter).*

And this is what happens over time. Thanks to the courageous work of the police officers, well led, guided by the map, guided by commanders who were constantly redeploying to get ahead of the crime and send the resources to where the opportunities for lifesaving actually happened to be, from 1999 to 2000, 2000 to 2001, 2002, 2003, and you get the point. And, yes, sometimes "The Empire Strikes Back," but you keep going.

Anyway, a good friend of mine, who is also a good friend to this organization, named Jack Dangermond, once described the power of GIS to me in this way. He said, *"you know, we're all familiar with talking about different silos of endeavor in human organizations, and we've got to break down the silos,"* we have to put the silos on their side. Jack said, *"we don't need to put the silos on their side, and there's no way to connect up and down all of these individual levels and layers in each silo of human endeavor. You could do that. It would be a wonderful annuity for somebody in an IT company to try to connect all of that. They could spend lifetimes trying to do that. But it's not about putting the silos on their side; it's about having all of the silos land on the same grid. It's about making sure that the base of each silo is on a map, on a Geographic Information System, on a map that organizes the information and then measures those endeavors on the same grid. And if you do that, then the coordination and the cooperation will start to happen by itself if you keep driving those other principles, the relentless follow-up, forcing people to communicate, to cooperate and talk with one another around the map, with the critical reflection, the critical conversations and the critical actions that drive the graphs in the right direction."*

The true power of smart maps, by Beth Blauer here, is that they allow us to bring people closer to their government, and with the internet, citizens can now participate in their own self-governance, I think, to a degree that we've never had before in our democracy. I want to run through some things live, which is why I brought Beth up here so I don't screw it up.

Live GIS Demo

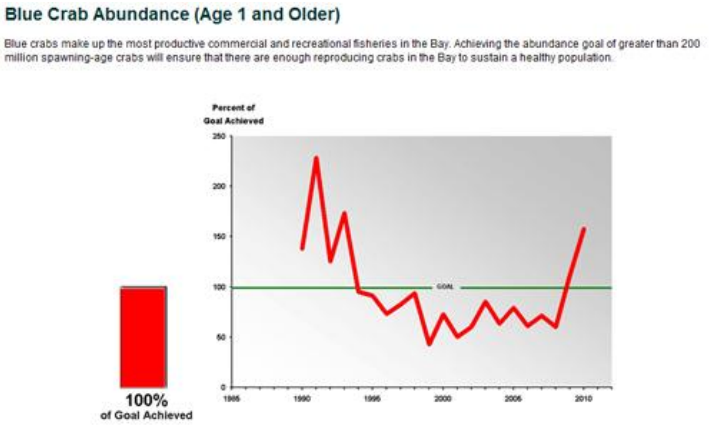
Rick kindly mentioned the Bay and the improvements we've started to see in the health of the Bay, crab population rebounding greatly thanks to decisions guided by science and the map. And we thank our neighbors in Virginia for sticking with those.

This is online for everybody to see. This is BayStat.

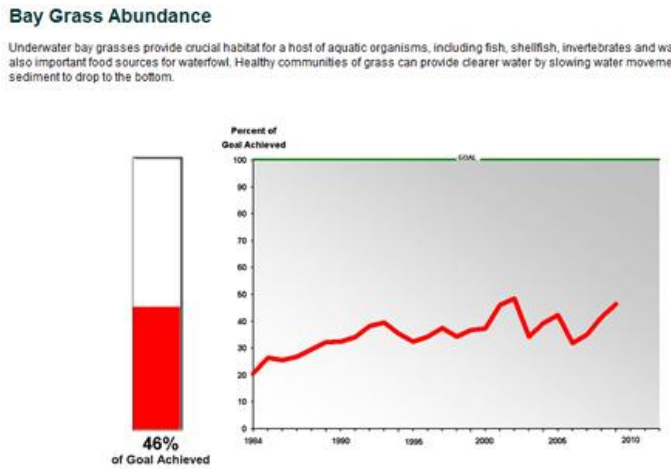
This is performance measurement applied around the map to the map and to the effort of improving the health of the

Chesapeake Bay. We can go to the current health and give you the latest scorecard, report card, some graphs moving in the right direction. Where's my crab map? I love that graph. *(Laughter).*

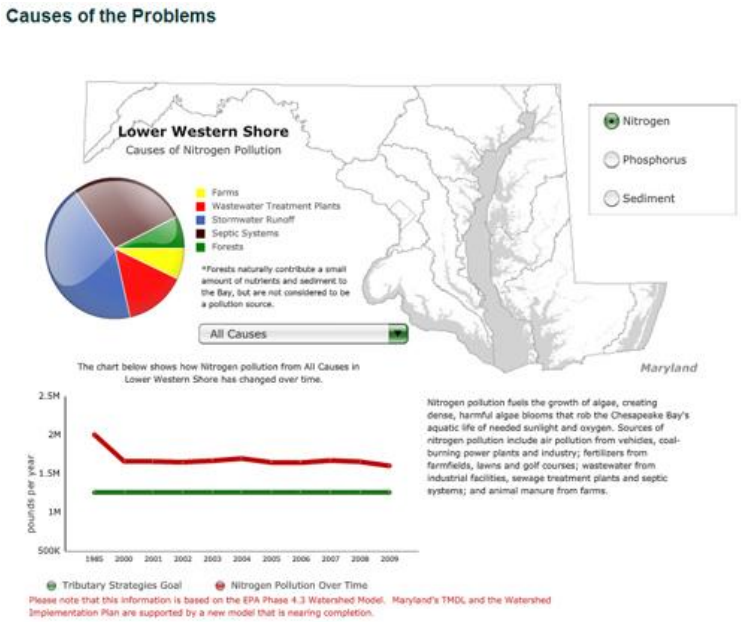
There's the crab graph.



How about the bay grass? Bay grass.



Another graph moving in the right direction.

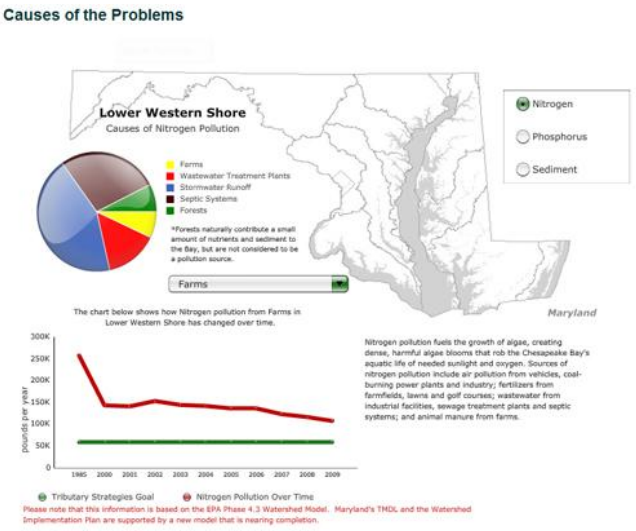


These are all divided by the individual watersheds within the Bay, 10 of them primarily.

And the pie chart kind of shows you, the yellow is the nitrogen runoff from farms; the red is nitrogen runoff from sewer systems. The blue is from stormwater; the black is septic systems. Green is forests, because, yes, even forests produce nitrogen. And you can

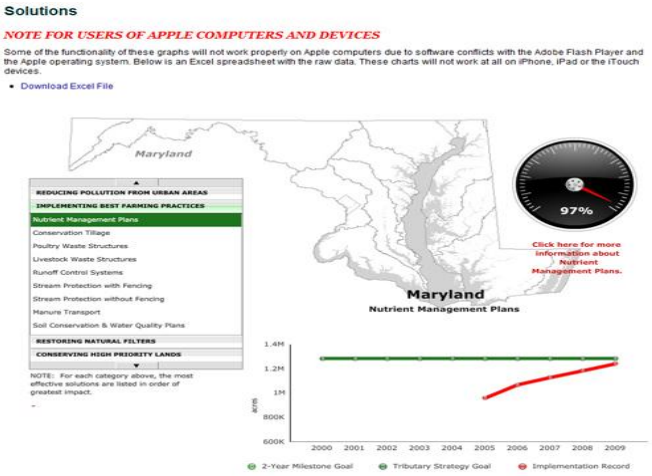
see they change, relative to one another, from place to place.

So, on the Lower Shore, the green is the goal line that we're trying to reach in terms of nitrogen reduction in this watershed. The red shows you what we've done to date across all causes.



Best management practices on farms. Now click over to the causes on the Western Shore around Annapolis, the Severn, the Magothy. Anybody from the Severn or Magothy here, the south?

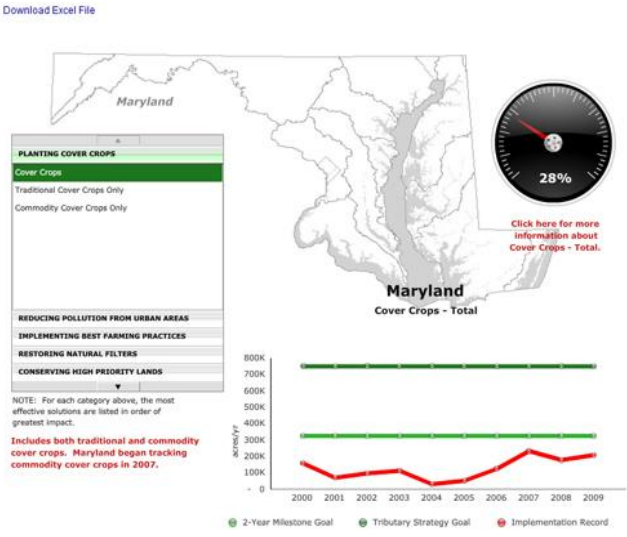
A few of you. This is your area. Look how large the septic becomes as a contributor to nitrogen pollution.



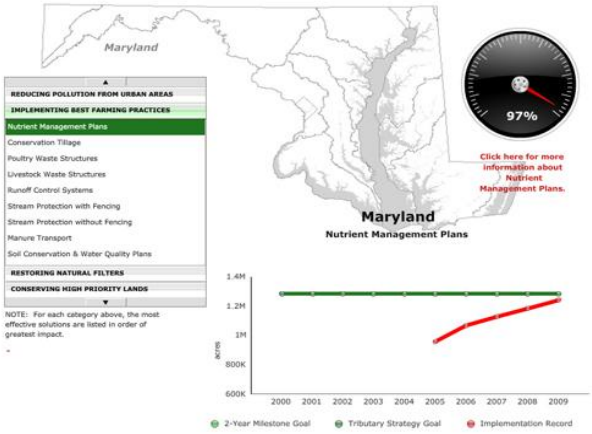
And now let's go through the solutions here.

This is where we get into the audience participation. There's about 26, maybe 30 actions that we've brought on here by each watershed; things that we can do to improve the health of each watershed. Some of them require a lot of expense, like upgrading the sewer systems, wastewater treatment plants, which those of us in Maryland have been doing a lot of.

Some of them involve cover crops.

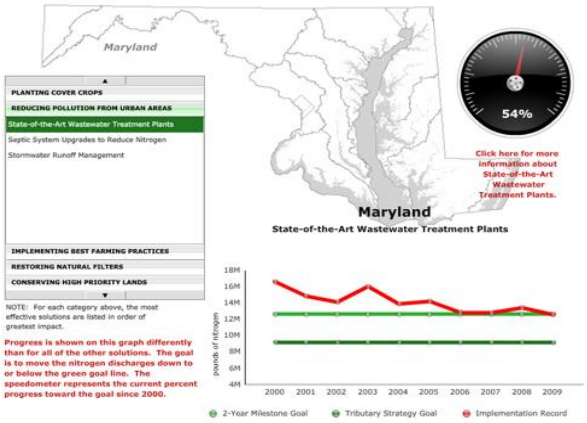


Here's nutrient management plants.



is

This is the goal we're trying to get to. This the bigger milestone. This is the red -- the human activity toward this goal, every month, every year.



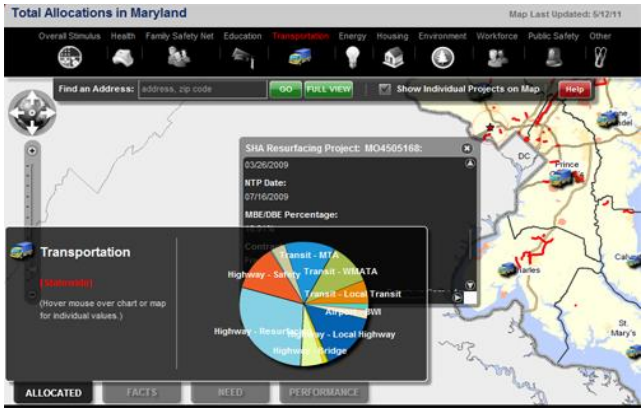
Go to overall Maryland and go to wastewater treatment plants.

Now, ladies and gentlemen, is this a graph moving in the right direction or the wrong direction? How many of you think right direction, raise your hand. How many of you think wrong direction? Smart group. I think we can go on. (*Laughter)*

When President Obama passed the Recovery and Reinvestment Act, we were faced with a big challenge. All the birds in the rafters were saying *"there's no way they're going to be able to keep track of these dollars,..." "There will be waste, fraud, and abuse everywhere,..." "There's no possible way we can manage this,...." "We have no confidence in our government,...." "Government's bad; it can't work,..." "This will never work,...." (Laughter)*

Maryland became the first state to actually map all of the dollars and where they land from Recovery and Reinvestment.

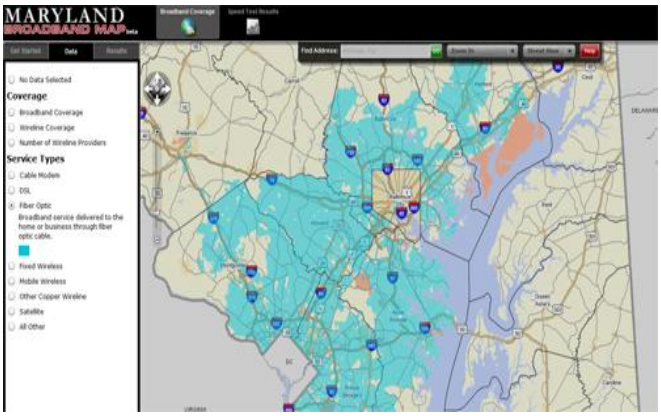
Most of the other states in the union soon started following. With Jack Dangermond's help with ESRI, we were able to do this. Citizens can go on and see where the Recovery and Reinvestment Act -- where the dollars were appropriated, education, health, transportation. Then they can clikic to see in their own county, where the projects are. They can click onto a particular project in a county and see how much it was, when it started work, when the bids went out, how much the MBE percent of that -- the minority business part of the performance was.



A reporter asked -- after Beth and her team got some nice kudos for doing this and doing it well - why we don't do that with our state capital budget. So, we now do it with our state capital budget.

And we did the same thing for the school construction dollars we appropriated, the transportation dollars, all of the tax dollars that people pay in order to make their common platform of their own government work to improve their quality of life. They can now go on the map and see that.

They can compare it against other counties, see if it's being distributed fairly. They can see if it's making things better, making things worse, whether we're making any progress or not.



We also recently mapped where the broadband is in our State, because we believe in Maryland that timeless economic truth that a modern economy requires modern investments, not only in transportation and infrastructure, but in cyber and information infrastructure.

And with President Obama's help, we're investing $115 million to connect all of our counties to broadband infrastructure, and

we've been able to map where the coverage is, where the speed is and people can go on and test their own speed from home and add that to the data that's in the map.

We've also -- inspired by Green Building Council and Chris Pike's map -- we've mapped our own buildings.

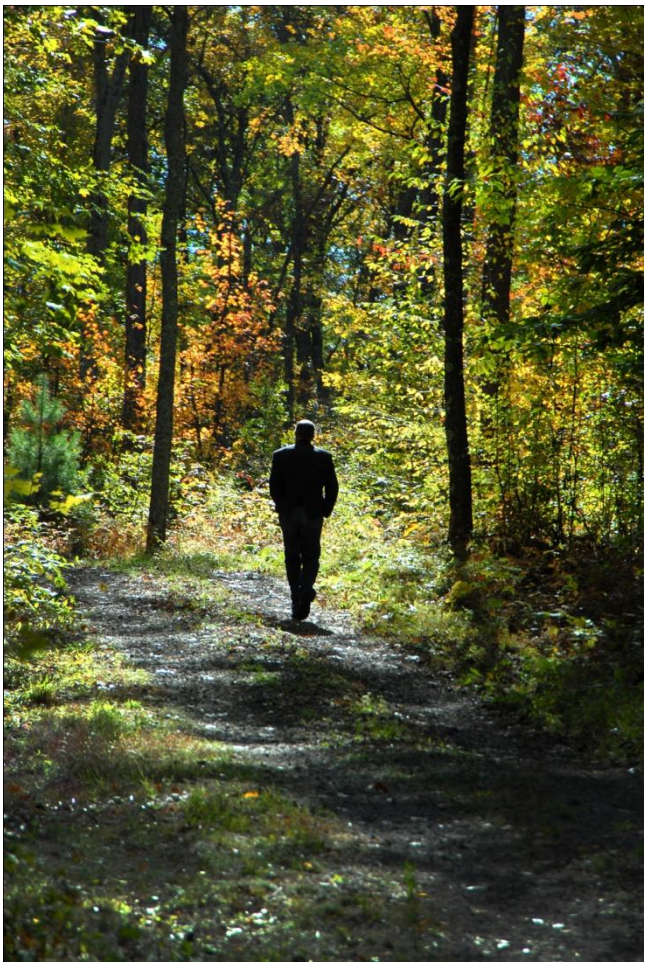
Green buildings on our energy Maryland map that show you the solar panels, wind turbines, energy-saving subcontracts and other aspects. And we're looking forward to collaborating with the Green Building Council so we can kind of open source these things and be able to give our people the ability, not only to take the individual actions, but to see how it affects where we're going as a whole and where we're going as a community.

Conclusion

So, let me wrap up here. And thank you, Beth, for keeping pace. (Applause).

When I was first elected mayor, up in our big room, the command room, the CitiStat room, we would bring in community associations and different groups from all over the City. And it never failed, as I would go through this, showing where the trash complaints are, the 48-hour pothole guarantee and where we were hitting it and how long the time was running,… Invariably, whether the group of community leaders were from a wealthy neighborhood or a poor neighborhood, black or white neighborhood, they would look at these maps – maps which, by the way, don't know whether a neighborhood is black or white or rich or poor or Democratic or Republican -- actually we have other maps that tell us this. *(Laughter)* -- but the maps tell us where the opportunities are. They tell us where the problems are where the opportunity is – and invariably when I would start going through this, after 10 minutes, someone would raise their hand from the back of the room and ask the age-old question, "can you show me my house?" Can you show me my house?

I've often wondered why it is that people ask that question. *Is it to understand "what's happening around me?"* Is it to know that *"I matter to my neighbors?"* Is it to know that *"I matter to my government?"* Is it to know maybe that *"my government matters to me, that it's working and that it affects the things around me?"* Or is it perhaps about a deeper yearning for connection, that innate human instinct to belong, to better understand the bonds that connect us to the forces and people around us, to better understand how the collective decisions of my neighbors affect my house, my life. *How my individual actions affect my neighbors, my community, and the future that our children will share.*



Smart maps, GIS, better connect us with the actions we take together through that common platform of our government,… they better connect us to our neighborhoods and to our neighbors. They have the power to inform, empower, enable, enhance, elevate our ability to govern ourselves as individuals and as a community.

I firmly believe that people, together, will mostly make the right decisions if they are mostly informed.

But a government of the people, by the people and for the people must also be open to having its performance measured by the people. It must make the trajectory of its performance visible to the people it serves. It must show the boss, if you will, that progress, in fact, is possible and that there are good and bad consequences for the good and bad decisions that we make as individuals and as a community.

I'll leave, as I began, with the words of Thomas Berry, who in his book The Great Work, wrote this: he said, we might describe the challenge before us by the following sentence, *"The historical mission of our times is to reinvent the human at the species level with critical reflection in a time-developmental context by means of story and shared dream experience,..." (pause)*

One of the biggest questions in this mission is this: *can we effectively govern ourselves in the context of this new Ecozoic Era*? ... Are we capable, in other words, of making the often tough but right

decisions necessary to live, not only a more sustainable existence, but a more life-giving and renewing existence?

Our greatest challenge is not technological; it's political.

Can we forge the precious consensus necessary to meet the challenges of our times?

Our highest struggle is not financial. I would submit to you our highest hurdle is spiritual.

Can we comprehend as individuals, and as a human family, the Light within, the grace to remake ourselves; into a renewing force within the context of the Creator's built environment? ...

For there is more to the pursuit of happiness than simply life and liberty. Expectations do become behavior. And the work of the Green Building Council is changing behavior. GIS and effective governance can change expectations and thereby change behavior; change expectations of cruelty in our relationship with the other life forms of this earth to expectations of kindness; change expectations of taking to expectations of giving; change expectations of exploiting to expectations of renewing; expectations of depleting to expectations of regenerating.

This is our story. This is the dream that we share. This is the great work that you and I choose. And the future is watching. Thanks very, very much. (Applause).